

Message Text

CONFIDENTIAL

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44

ACTION NEA-10

INFO OCT-01 AF-06 EUR-12 ISO-00 IO-10 SSO-00 NSCE-00

USIE-00 INRE-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-02 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 SAM-01

OMB-01 NEAE-00 /081 W

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O 101755Z NOV 75

FM AMEMBASSY RABAT

TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 6948

INFO AMEMBASSY ALGIERS IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY MADRID IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY NOUAKCHOTT IMMEDIATE

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY TRIPOLI

AMEMBASSY TUNIS

AMCONSUL CASABLANCA

AMCONSUL TANGIER

USMISSION USUN IMMEDIATE

CINCUSNAVEUR LONDON

USCINCEUR VAIHINGEN GERMANY

FOSIF ROTA

COMSIXTHFLT

C O N F I D E N T I A L RABAT 5455

USCINCEUR AND CINCUSNAVEUR ALSO FOR POLADS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, PBOR, MO, SP, SS

SUBJECT: SAHARA DEVELOPMENTS

1. GOM/GOS TALKS. GOM ANNOUNCED MORNING NOV. 10 THAT MOROCCAN DELEGATION TO GO TO MADRID WITHIN 48 HOURS FOR "OFFICIAL TALKS" ON SAHARA. COMPOSITION OF DELEGATION NOT REVEALED. TIGHT LID ON DETAILS OF GOM/GOS UNDERSTANDING CONTINUES TO BE CONFIDENTIAL

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MAINTAINED HERE BY BOTH MOROCCAN AND SPANISH SOURCES.

2. MARCHERS REMAIN POISED. MEANWHILE, KING HAS RETURNED TO MARRAKECH. GOM MEDIA ANNOUNCED MIDDAY NOV 10 THAT MARCHERS HAVE BEGUN TO RETURN TO TARFAYA, AND FOREIGN NEWS REPORT INDICATES MININFO BENHIMA STATED IN NOV 10 PRESS CONFERENCE THAT MARCHERS WILL RETURN TO TARFAYA STAGING CAMPS AND WAIT UNTIL FUTURE OF SAHARA RESOLVED BY NEGOTIATIONS. HE ALSO REPORTEDLY SAID MARCHERS WILL RETURN TO SAHARA IF TALKS FAIL. WE HAVE NOT YET SEEN TEXT OF HIS REMARKS, BUT GOM RADIO QUOTED BENHIMA AS SAYING MARCHERS TO RETURN TO TARFAYA AND THAT "POINT AT STAKE NOW IS THEIR STAY IN TARFAYA." RADIO ALSO REPORTED HE SAID GOM HAD NO INTENTION SETTLE MARCHERS PERMANENTLY IN SAHARA. ACCORDING TO RADIO BENHIMA REPEATED KING'S CONCILIATORY REMARKS ABOUT SPAIN.

3. INTENSE MOROCCAN/MAURITANIAN CONTACTS CONTINUE. GOM/GIRM CONTACTS CONTINUE WITH LATEST DEVELOPMENT NOV 9 VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT BY FONMIN LARAKI. THIS WAS SECOND HIGH-LEVEL GOM VISITOR TO NOUAKCHOTT IN THREE DAYS (RABAT 5430). WE NOTE FBIS REPORTS OF VISIT TO NOUAKCHOTT BY ALGERIAN SECURITY CHIEF, AND VISIT TO ALGERIA BY GIRM PRESIDENT OULD DADDAH.

4. ALGERIA. AFTERNOON NOV 9 EDITION SEMI-OFFICIAL MAROC SOIR FRONT-PAGED REUTER STORY ON BOUMEDIENNE INTERVIEW WITH NOUVEL OBSERVATEUR UNDER HEADLINE, "US AND FRANCE APPLIED PRESSURE ON SPAIN TO TURN OVER SAHARA TO MOROCCO." EDITORIAL COMMENT INSERTED IN TEXT OF STORY TOOK ISSUE WITH BOUMEDIENNE'S MENTION OF DJEBILET IRON ORE DEPOSITS NEAR TINDOUF, CHARGING THAT ALGERIA HAS NEVER FOLLOWED UP ON ACCORD SIGNED PROVIDING FOR JOINT EXPLORATION.

5. GOM CONTINUED ITS SILENCE ON REPORTS COMING OUT OF ALGERIAN MEDIA OF CLASHES IN SAHARA. HOWEVER, RABAT RADIO'S REPORT OF BENHIMA'S NOV 10 PRESS CONFERENCE QUOTED HIM AS SAYING JOINT SPANISH/MOROCCAN OBJECTIVE IN DECIDING NEGOTIATE QUESTION WAS DESIRE PREVENT "FOREIGN INTERESTS TAKING ADVANTAGE...AND INFILTRATING AREA." HE ALSO REPORTEDLY ALLUDED TO "THOSE WHO HAVE THEIR EYES ON ATLANTIC WATERS."

6. COMMENT: WAIT AND SEE ATTITUDE SEEMS TO PREVAIL AMONG MOROCCAN
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PUBLIC FOR MOMENT, AND THERE LITTLE EVIDENCE OF ANY STRONGER POPULAR REACTION TO KING'S SPEECH. AS WE HAVE NOTED, THIS COULD CHANGE VERY QUICKLY IF PULLBACK OF MARCHERS COMES TO BE VIEWED AS MOROCCAN SETBACK. HOLDING MARCHERS POISED IN TARFAYA COULD HELP EXTEND KING'S DOMESTIC GRACE PERIOD WHILE NEGOTIATIONS PROGRESS. THIS ALSO NO DOUBT PROVIDES KING WITH SOME NEGOTIATING LEVERAGE, ALTHOUGH IT WILL BE INTERESTING TO SEE SPANISH REACTION TO WHAT SOME COULD INTERPRET AS THREAT TO RESUME MARCH.

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